

PART II

GRANT COUNTY POPULATION

Growth

Permanent settlers did not begin moving into Grant County until the latter part of the 1800's, largely because of Indian hostility, lack of transportation, and remoteness from populated areas. The population gradually increased during the 1870's, 80's, and 90's with the coming of stockmen, homesteaders, and railroads, but remained at a low level through the turn of the century. Douglas County, which included Grant County from the organization of the former in 1883 until Grant was made a separate county in 1909, counted only 3,161 inhabitants in 1890 and 4,925 in 1900. Grant County alone then jumped to 9,227 in 1910 as transportation improved and agricultural activity increased. Depression and drought brought a decline in population to 7,771 in 1920 and to a low of 5,666 in 1930. Dam construction during the 1930's and irrigation activity beginning in the 1940's then caused a rapid population upsurge that was helped along by the growth of agricultural and other industries and by Larson Air Force Base. The number of people in the county rose to 14,668 by 1940 and to 24,346 by 1950. Grant County's 1960 population of 46,477 placed it 14th among Washington counties.

Distribution

Eighty percent of Grant County's 46,477 people lived within 30 road miles of Moses Lake in 1960. Of these, the city itself contained 11,299 people, or about 24 percent of the county's total. Next most populated is the Quincy-Ephrata-Soap Lake area in the northwestern part of the Quincy Basin. Other, smaller centers of population are Grand Coulee in the extreme northern end of the county, Warden in the southeast, and Coulee City at the southern tip of the Grand Coulee Equalizing Reservoir. The rest of the population is scattered rather thinly and evenly over the county, being denser in irrigated areas and quite sparse in the Central Plains to the north and south of Crab Creek.

Urban and Rural Population

Grant County was entirely rural through 1930 according to Bureau of the Census definition, as there were no towns of 2,500 or more inhabitants. Urban growth started with the birth of Grand Coulee City during construction of Grand Coulee Dam in the 1930's. This city reached 3,659 in 1940, then dwindled to 2,741 in 1950 and to 1,058 in 1960 as dam construction was completed. Ephrata, the county seat, was the largest town in 1950 with 4,589 people. It was overtaken shortly by Moses Lake, however, whose population made a phenomenal gain from 2,679 in 1950 to 11,299 ten years later. Quincy, with 3,269 people in 1960, is the only other town qualifying as urban.

From 100 percent in 1930, the county's rural fraction decreased to about 55 percent in 1960. In actual numbers, however, the rural population has grown steadily--from 5,666 in 1930 to 11,009 in 1940, to 14,337 in 1950, and to 25,361 in 1960.

The farm population numbered 2,514 in 1940, dropped slightly to 2,217 in 1950, then climbed to 5,732 in 1960 as irrigation began on the Columbia Basin Project. The remaining rural inhabitants (19,629 in 1960) lived in the country but not on farms, and were classed as rural nonfarm. The recent increase of

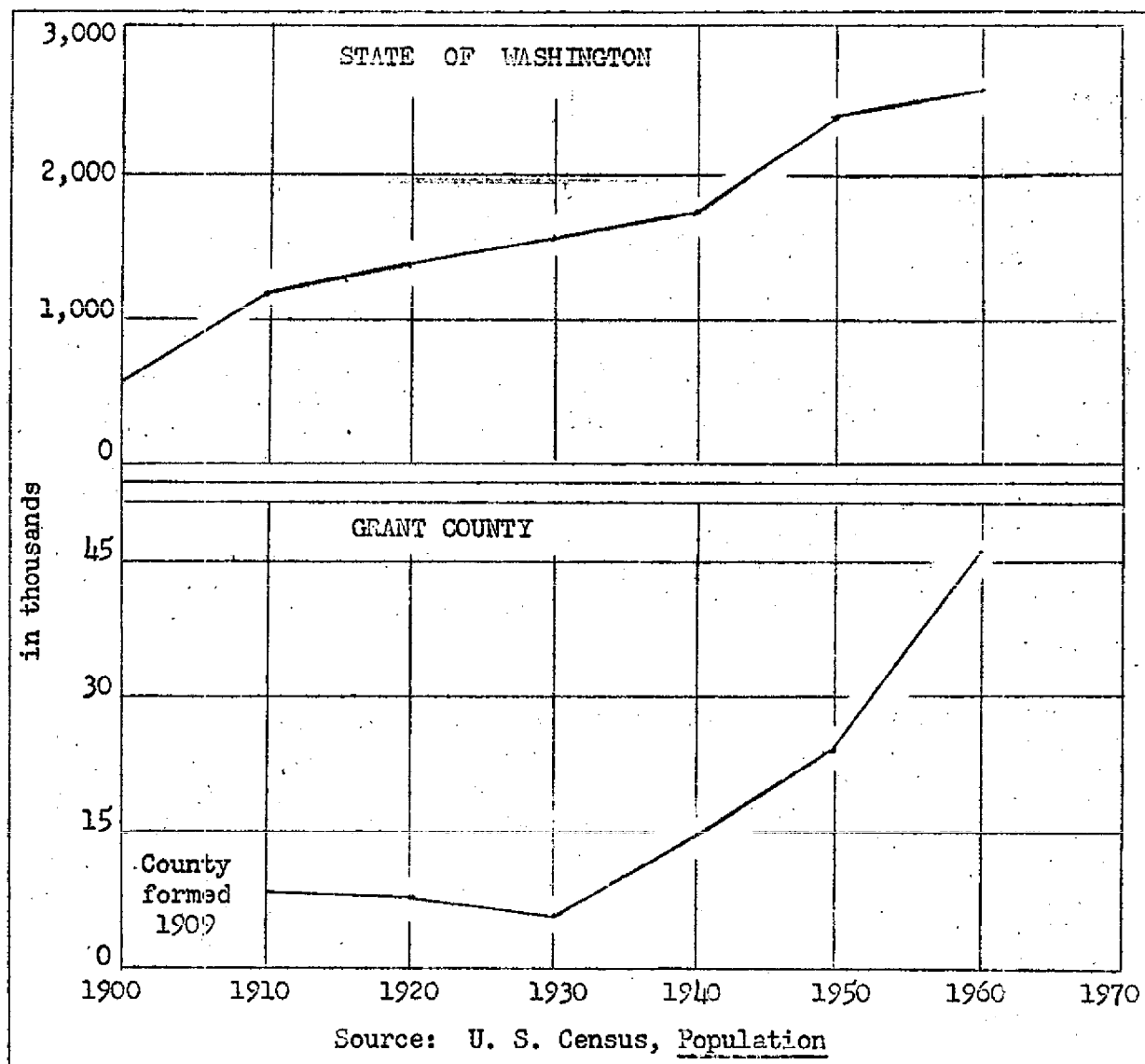


Figure 1. Population Trends: 1900-1960

Table 1. Population of Grant County, 1900-1960

Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1900	1/	100	0
1910	8,698	100	0
1920	7,771	100	0
1930	5,666	100	0
1940	14,668	75.1	24.9
1950	24,346	58.8	41.2
1960	46,477	54.6	45.4

1/ No Census data; established as a county in 1909.

Source: U. S. Census, Population

farmers is in contrast to the rest of the state and nation, which in general, has experienced a movement of people from farms to cities.

Table 2. Population of Incorporated Places
Grant County, 1910-1960

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Coulee City	276	472	420	744	977	654
Electric City	--	--	--	--	--	404
Ephrata	323	628	516	951	4,589	6,548
Grand Coulee	--	--	--	3,659	2,741	1,058
Hartline	237	282	170	168	205	206
Krupp	--	106	101	94	98	99
Mattawa	--	--	--	--	--	394
Moses Lake	--	--	--	326	2,679	11,299
Quincy	264	285	266	318	804	3,269
Soap Lake	--	352	282	622	2,091	1,591
Warden	--	173	100	78	322	949
Westlake	--	--	--	--	--	298
Wilson Creek	405	300	216	210	337	252

Source: U. S. Census of Population

Population Characteristics

Typical of many counties in the western United States, Grant County was settled by a mixture of immigrants from other states and from foreign countries. In 1920, about one-seventh of the settlers on the wheat farms and livestock ranches were from Europe. Most prominent were Ukrainians who migrated between 1910 and 1920 from wheatlands in southern Russia. They numbered 377 in 1920, and were prominent in the wheat areas of the Big Bend and Waterville Plateau. Germans were the second most numerous and Swedes third among the Europeans settling in Grant County.

Although the number of foreign-born residents increased from 1,119 in 1920 to 1,777 in 1960, their proportion of the total population dropped from 15 to 4 percent. The most frequent mother tongues among the foreign-born in 1960 were English (501), Spanish (225), German (219), Japanese (95), and Norwegian (71). Non-whites numbered 1,493 in 1960, or 3 percent of the total population. The races represented were Negro (832), Japanese (409), Indian (127), Chinese (38), Filipino (37), and other races (50).

Of Grant County's 14,540 employed workers in 1960, 2,350 (16 percent) were in agriculture. Miscellaneous services such as finance, insurance, real estate, education, medical facilities, repair services and others employed 3,286. Retail and wholesale trade claimed 2,716. Another 2,003 worked in construction and 1,493 in manufacturing. Transportation facilities, communications and public utilities employed 1,241, and 1,089 worked in public administration.

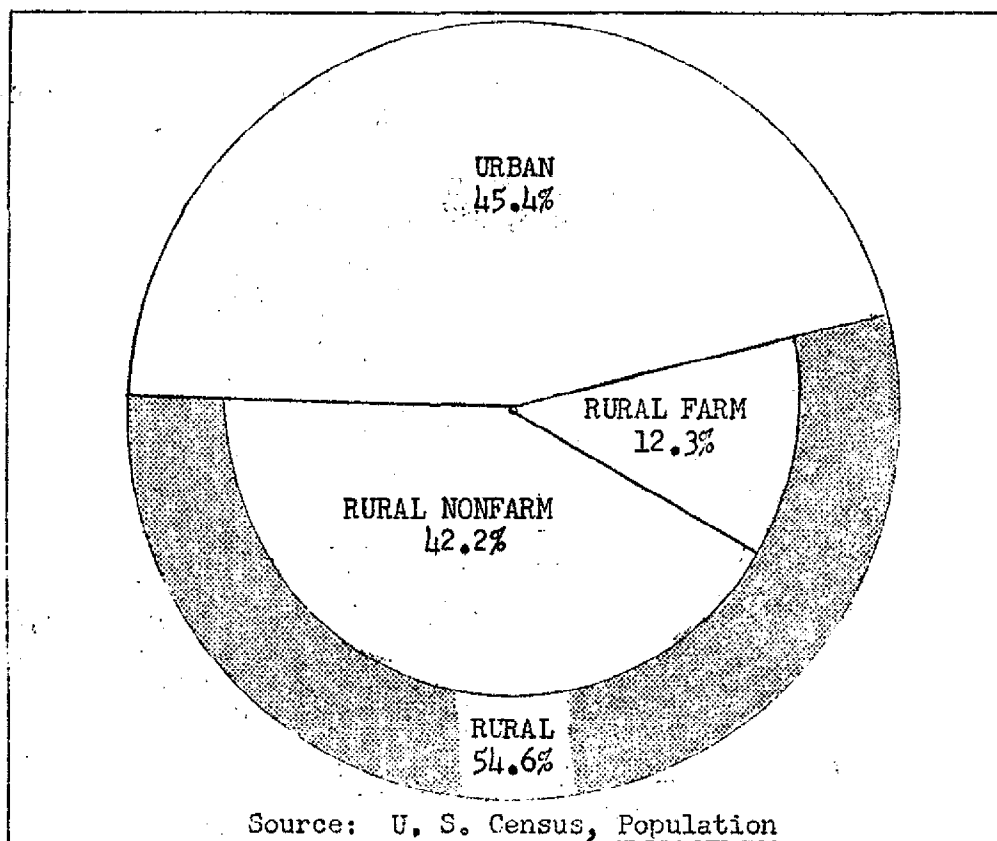


Figure 2. Urban and Rural Population, Grant County, 1960

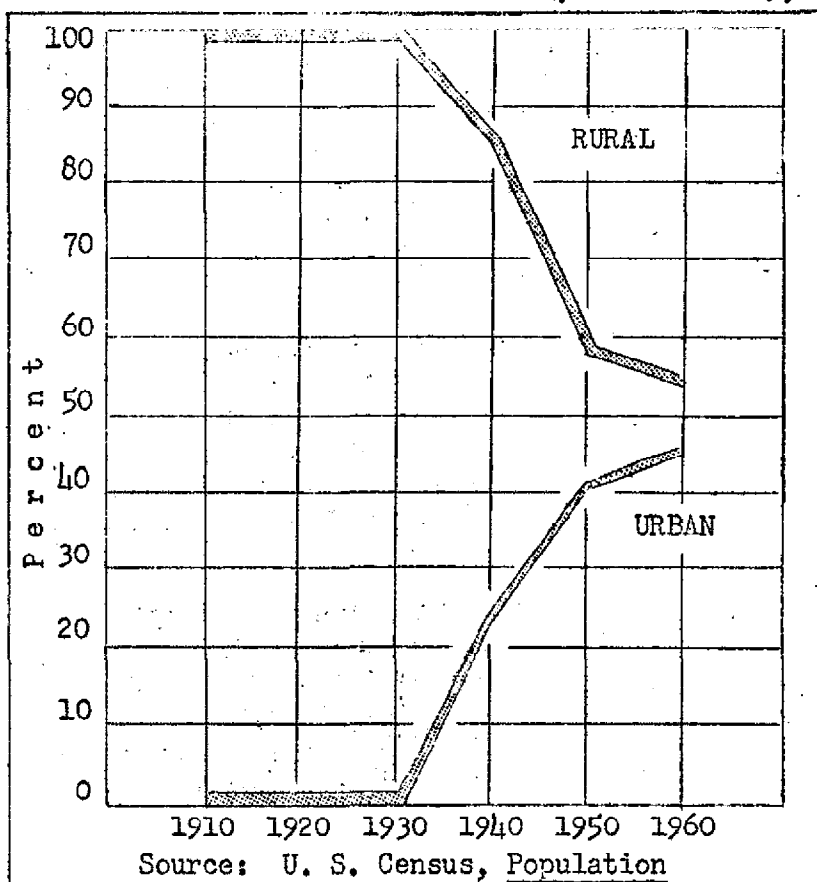


Figure 3. Rural and Urban Population Trends, Grant County, 1910-1960

Table 3. Employment of the Population
Grant County, 1960

Types of Employment	Total Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	14,540
Agriculture	2,350
Forestry and Fisheries . . .	12
Mining	40
Construction	2,003
Manufacturing	1,493
Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities . . .	1,241
Retail and Wholesale Trade .	2,716
Miscellaneous Services . . .	3,266
Public Administration (govern- ment employment)	1,089
Industry not reported	310

Source: U. S. Census, Population

The ratio of males to females in the county in 1930 was 129 to 100. The ratio for the farm population was 141 to 100, and for the rural nonfarm, 115 to 100. The situation had improved somewhat from the male standpoint by 1960, with 111 males per 100 females. The ratio on the farms was 113 to 100, and for the rural nonfarm population, 118 to 100.

The age structure reflects the recent expansion and influx of young newcomers in that young age classes account for a larger proportion of the inhabitants than in areas of more stable population. Young people under 18 years made up 42.4 percent of the county's population in 1960, as compared to 36.0 percent for the state. The median age that year was 23.5 for the county and 29.6 for the state. People 65 years old and over accounted for 4.2 percent of the county's inhabitant and 9.8 percent of the state's.

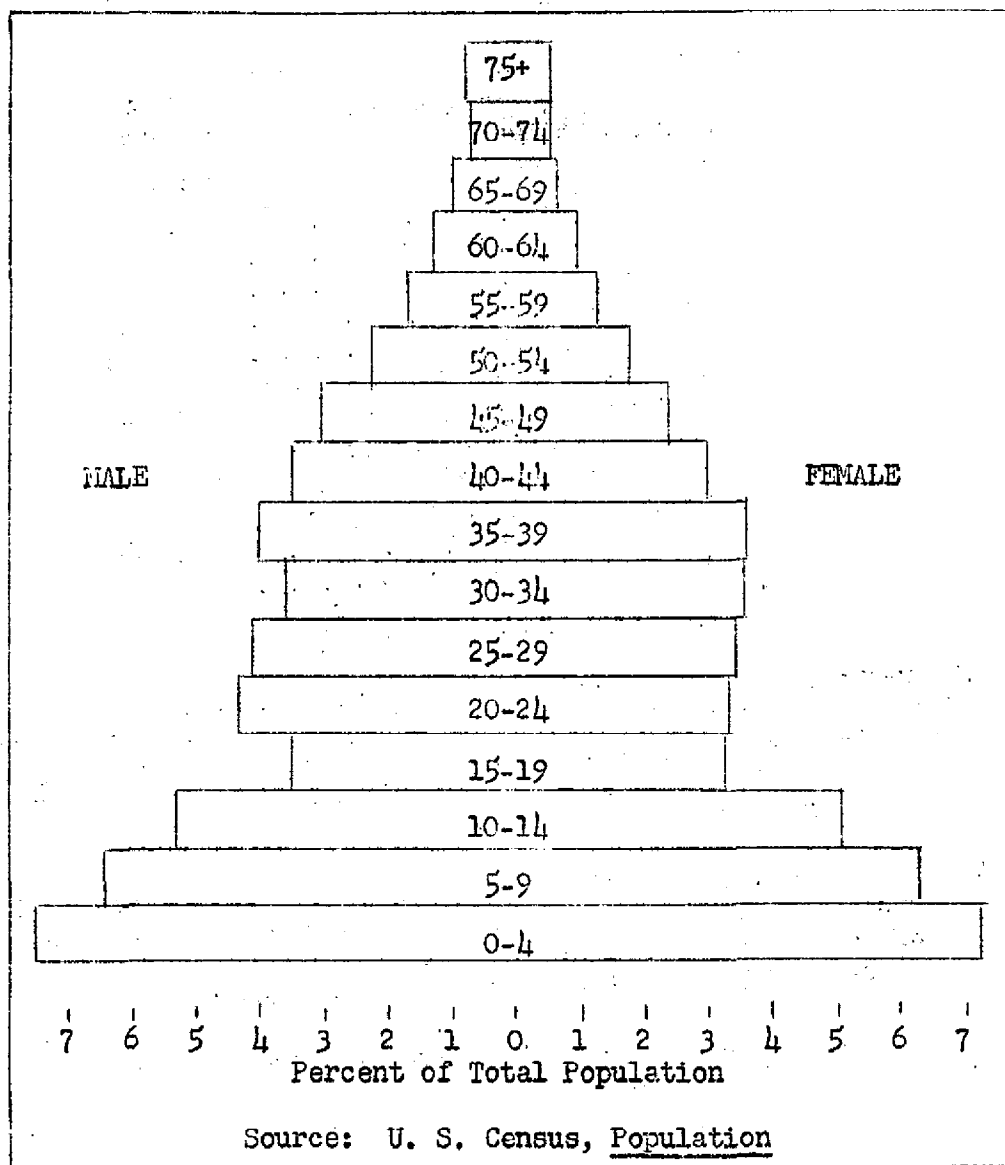


Figure 4. Age Distribution of Population, Grant County, 1960